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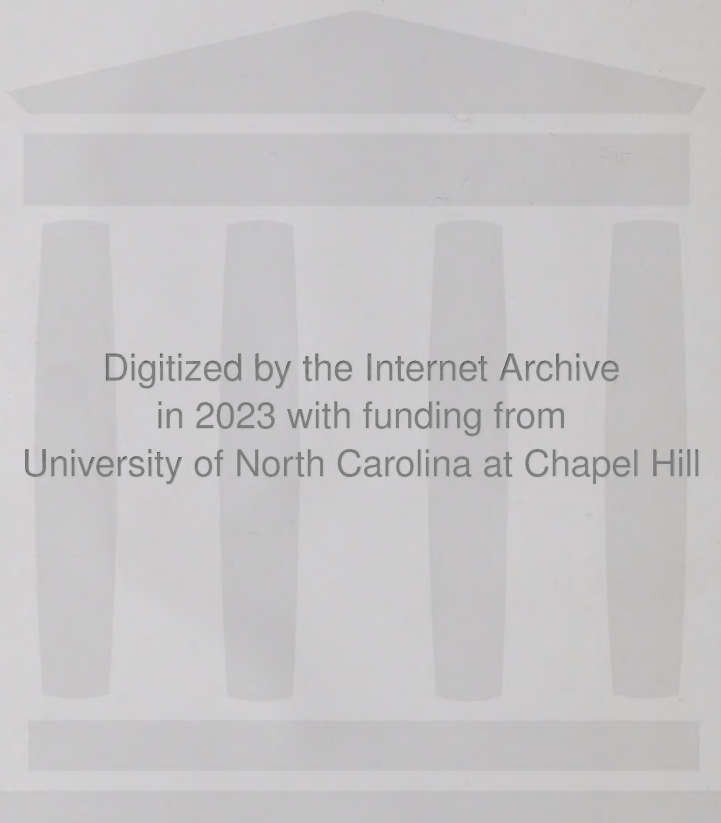
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FAIRY TALES AND FANCIES

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By ANNA SIEDENBURG

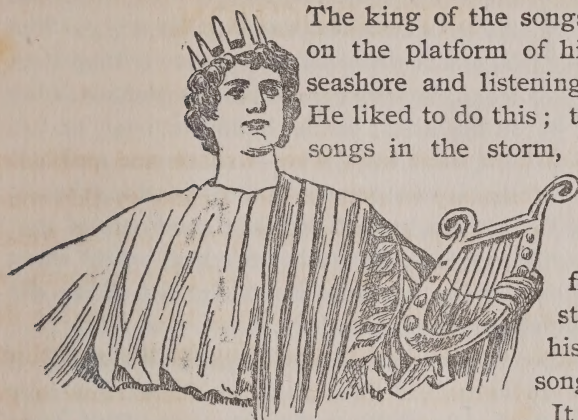
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the Author..

CHICAGO ✻ 1895

Fairy Tales
and Fancies

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ANNA SIEDENBURG

THE LITTLE LADY OF THE COURT.



The king of the songs was standing on the platform of his castle at the seashore and listening to the storm. He liked to do this ; there were great songs in the storm, and wonderful melodies in the rustling of the waves, and from ocean and storm he learned his most beautiful songs.

It was near day-break ; the storm grew softer and softer and died away, when the ocean joyfully greeted the rising of the sun. There was a sea-gull coming all alone over the water to the shore, slowly moving, and reaching the place where the king stood, it fell down at his feet and stayed there motionless.

The king lifted it up, and gently caressed the beautiful snow-white bird, and as he lifted the wing, which seemed broken by the storm, there was a shivering passing through the motionless body of the bird, and like a flash it changed, and the king held in his arms a lovely little maiden, clad in a snow-white garment, and with a band of pearls in her golden hair. She sighed, and looked at the king with eyes that did not seem to realize life.

“ This is a wonderful surprise ! ” said the king. “ Thanks to the storm that brought thee hither. But how couldst thou lend thy wings to such a storm, poor little thing ? ”

And, as he was speaking thus, he carried the little maiden,



who did not speak nor move, in his arms to his castle. Breakfast was just prepared, and the court was waiting for the king. The lady of ceremonies made a very critical face, when the king came in with a pretty maiden in his arms, but he handed it over to her and said with a voice so tender and soft that it even touched her conventional heart:

“Put this little maiden to bed and take good care of her; she met with a storm where you never dreamt of. And when she is rested, give her the place of honor by my side; she shall be my little lady of the court.”

And so she was; the favorite of the king, the little lady of the court.

The most beautiful roses of the garden, the rarest fruit, were picked out for her. The king himself would look out for the most tiny flowers and put them in her hair, saying that they seemed to be made just for her.

The king was not a faultless king, but believed himself to be so, because he was surrounded by flattery. The little lady of the court was the first one who told him the truth, and she did it in such a way, that it did not hurt but rather amused him. The first time she heard him sing, and the court could not find words enough to praise him, she was sitting there silently with downcast eyes.

“And you, my little lady,” asked the king, “you tell me nothing?”

Then she raised her eyes to him and the eyes told more—much more—than any word could do.

The king, famous as he was, and seldom as he used his voice, yet often sang for the little lady of the court, for her alone; and while he sang, he read in her eyes, where a gentle



soul unfolded herself to his own. But the king was given to moods. There were days when he shut himself up in his room and sang nothing but scales and exercises all day long, when he would be angry if he could not sing the high C as well as usual, and he would see nobody, not even the little lady of the court.

It was on such a day, when he stepped out of his room into the hall, where the ladies were sitting embroidering, and flirting, by the way, with the counselors.

"Where is my little lady of the court?" asked the king. No one had seen her.

Impatiently he stepped out on the platform.

There she was sitting, all alone, on the very spot where she once fell down a sea-gull, with broken wings. The king took her tiny hands that lay clasped in her lap, and said: "Do you think your king capricious and fickle, my little lady?—No, I am not! But you know, I just found out that all my songs are nothing; but that one which I read in your eyes—it is the truest, the sweetest—the song of love. Come to my heart and teach me!"

But she looked at him with sad eyes and said: "Do you not hear the storm come? It comes for me. There is no love, no rest for me. As a wandering bird, I must go again across the wide sea. But I will think of you, oh, I will think of you!"

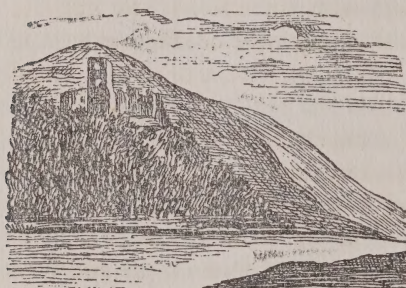
As she spoke, her voice grew fainter, and she vanished in the air.

Not far from the place where the king stood, there was a sea-gull lifting its wings with a band of pearls around the neck; it moved slowly towards the ocean; then moving quicker and quicker as the rising storm seemed to carry it across the dark and roaring water.

The king has learned the song of love.


Only he can sing it who has learned love's sadness. And often he is standing on the platform at the seashore, watching the wide horizon, watching if there will not a sea-gull come back and fall down at his feet with broken wings. But none ever comes.

HOW A TRUE STORY BECAME A FAIRY TALE.



Spring had come again, the gardens were covered with flowers, and choirs of nightingales sang his praises; his light green veil seemed to spread all over the old castles which look down on the green Rhine. There stood on a lonely hill an old, old tree. The green veil of Spring made a strange contrast to his withered branches.

But when the night dew fell, and the stars sparkled, and the air was filled with the perfume of Spring flowers, that old tree seemed to reach up to the sky. The branches began to glow in a magic light and the leaves were sparkling like emeralds, for this old tree was a witch tree, in which all the fairy tales of the Rhine lived. As they were coming forth from the hollow tree, some seemed to be like fair petals of a beautiful flower; others were sparkling all over like rubies and diamonds, and among the fair ones there were some which reminded one of goblins. In an endless chain they came forth from the tree, and as they moved down to the Rhine with their long waving veils, they seemed like a bright cloud, that swept over the hill.



When they were all gone, there was a little figure left right under the old tree; she sat there and wept.

"Why didst thou not go with all the others?" said the old tree.

"Ah, dost thou not see that I have no wings? The fairy tales would not take me along; they are proud, and only think kings and princes their equal. Oh, if I could but have wings and be a fairy tale. But I am just a true little story. And people will not believe me, and will not cherish me, because they say I cannot exist in the bustling time of the present."

"And which is the story which thou hast to tell?" asked the tree.

"A story of a true love, of a love unto death."

"Yes, people believe no more in such stories," said the old tree. "When I was a young tree, one believed in it. But listen, you will find there under the stone the wings and veil of a fairy tale, which is long dead; you can take them and thus become a fairy tale yourself."


And the true little story took the wings and the veil of the bygone fairy tale, flew into the wide country, and told the tale of a true love, of a love unto death. And wherever it came, it was welcomed, and people said:

"Oh, what a sweet, touching fairy tale!"

How pleasant, if we meet in the realism of our life with such a tale!

THE MAN WITH THE MASK.

Once upon a time there lived a very bad man, who was so ugly that the children ran away when they caught sight of him, and grown-up people were afraid of him, for his words were poisonous and hurt, and he destroyed all that was good and beautiful.



One evening when he went out to look for some poisonous herbs, he saw in the shadows of twilight an old woman sitting near the woods, who was still uglier than he.

"Well, we can console each other," said the bad man, "for I see you are not particularly handsome either. Oh, how I hate them, these perfect ones who are proud and boast of their noble qualities, and who treat me like a dog which they detest!"

"You could be treated differently," said the old woman.

"Yes, if I only could have better looks!" said the bad man.

"You cannot change that, but you could wear a mask. I, too, wear a mask, and am treated tolerably well; look, do you realize still in me the ugly old woman?"

She had taken a mask and put it on her face; it did not bear any more the character of a detestable hag, but looked quiet and friendly, though it was the friendliness of a cat; and the piercing glance of her eye was half covered by heavy eyelids.

"I am hypocrisy," she said. "If I should show my true face, I should not get along well in the world; but with this quiet and friendly mask I do splendidly; slowly but deadly acts my poison."

"Could you not give me such a mask, too?" eagerly asked the bad man.

"Yes; look here: the pleasant mask of flattery; it changes not only your face, but all your manners. You will seem agreeable to people and get as many friends as you had enemies. But I cannot give you this mask for nothing."

"What do you ask me?"

"Before a year is gone, you must bring me twelve innocent young hearts; the mask will make it easy for you to obtain



them. You will find me every first of the month here on the same spot. But let me tell you that you have to take the mask off at night, as it would be your death if you should wear it all the time."

The bad man agreed upon the conditions, and so the old woman put the mask on his face.

At once he seemed to be entirely transformed. Meanwhile within him the devil lived just as before; he had the looks of a pleasant and even kind man. And as the old woman had told him those who formerly were his enemies became now his friends. He obtained wealth and honors, and every month he could keep his promise and bring to Hypocrisy an innocent young heart, which she swallowed eagerly.

When he had brought her all but one, she said: "I want something particularly nice now. Far in the north lives a fisherman's beautiful young child; she works night and day for her poor blind mother. In the wide world there is nothing as pure and untouched as her heart. If you can bring it to me in a month, you may keep the mask."

Then the bad man traveled to the north, where the fisherman's child lived at the lonely seashore. And he tried all the tricks of flattery to win her pure heart, but in vain.

The month was near its end, and slowly the heart of the beautiful maiden seemed to bend to the pleasant stranger.

But one night a disastrous storm swept over the seashore and the bad man, to save his life, escaped from the house without thinking to take his mask, and the maiden saw him by a flash of lightning in all his ugliness. The flash of lightning had struck him to death, and the mask of flattery was carried off by the waves.

But it is not the only one which Hypocrisy has to bestow.

THE SNOW-WHITE PRINCESS.



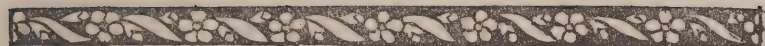
Once upon a time there was a princess who looked so pale that one would have thought she had not a drop of blood in her veins, if it had not been for her mouth that was red like a cherry. Her long, white hair surrounded her like a veil of silk. Though the princess was so pale, and had white hair, she was beautiful, and who once had looked in her eyes could never forget them. Above her crystal palace wonderful trees entwined their blooming branches, and never allowed a sunbeam to enter; so that there was a cool, pale light, like the dawn before the rising of the sun.

Beautiful white flowers perfumed the air, the seats were of white silk, and the floors were covered with white furs, which made every step inaudible. It was so still, oh, so still! Not even a bird sang. But in the middle of the hall splashed a fountain out of which grew a strange and beautiful flower, red as the mouth of the princess. In this realm, which was cool and charming like a moon night in May, the princess lived all alone.

Sometimes a wandering poet, who had lost his way in the forest, had found her realm of flowers and seen her walking in her park, or bent over one of her white blooming sisters, and his songs told of the snow-white princess with the cherry-red mouth. But no one ever had entered her palace.

The princess had a faithful guardian, a beautiful Newfoundland dog.

One morning when she was walking in the park, she had found him there. It seemed that he had lost his master, for



he looked haggard and hungry. He had looked at her with pleading eyes, had followed her and not left her again; and she called him True.

One day when the princess was resting in her park, she noticed that True became very restless. He was lifting his head in the air, running up and down along the hedges of white roses, and then disappeared suddenly. It was quite a while before he came back, and then he was not alone; he was followed by a handsome young man in a hunting costume. True was walking quietly beside him, looking up sometimes with clever eyes at his master. The young prince stopped when he noticed Snowwhite, and asked if he might enter her realm of blossoms.

"Certainly," said she, "if True allows thee."

"Ah, thou dost not know then that True is my dog?" said the prince. "I never thought to find him again, nor did I ever dream that he should introduce me in such a beautiful realm. For here seems to be eternal Spring, and thou art the most beautiful of all the blossoms."

But the princess was thinking of True, who was likely to leave her now.

"And thou wilt take True with thee?" she said sadly.

"Oh, no! Keep him as long as thou wilt. He will feel happier with thee. But may I come sometimes to see him?"

"And canst thou not stay here?"

"No, child. I have to rule a kingdom. Here it is too quiet and beautiful for me. But I will mark the trees to find my way back here, and I shall come again, if thou wilt have me come."

"Yes, come again!" said Snowwhite, and lifted her dreamy eyes to him. Then he bent down to her to kiss her brow.

"How beautiful thou art!" said he, and departed.



True followed his former master a few steps; then he returned and laid himself down at the feet of the princess.

She stayed a long while on the same spot, and when she rose, she felt for the first time how quiet it was around her. Then she spoke with True about his master, and he seemed to understand her so well. She had never seen him so clever.

And on a fresh and beautiful morning the prince came again. He put a dark red rose in Snowwhite's hair and said that was one of the flowers which were growing in his kingdom.

"And it is not quiet in thy kingdom?" asked Snowwhite.

"No, there are too many people for it to be quiet."

"And thou dost like the noise?"

"Not that, but the life. There I feel that I live. Here is no life—just a beautiful dream. May it last for thee, child."

"But I too will live!" said Snowwhite.

"Thou wouldst never be happy!" said the prince. "Thou wouldst fade and die like a flower in the burning sun of life."


"No; not when thou art there!" said Snowwhite. "Take me with thee. Let me behold the sun—let me live!"

Then the prince kissed her lips and said: "Thou lovest me!" And a faint blush spread over Snowwhite's cheeks like the first blush of morning.

Then the prince said: "Come with me. I will carry thee into the sunshine." And he lifted Snowwhite into his strong arms, and she leaned her cheek on his and felt happy.

There was a sighing passing through the trees, a shower of blossoms dropped down on the young couple, and a gentle zephyr whispered a farewell.

The prince carried Snowwhite through the dark forest up to a hill. But when they reached the top, there was sunshine, and at their feet lay spread the wonderful world.



Then he bent her head to his heart and said, "Dost thou hear how loud it beats? Dost thou realize what life is? More glorious than the world down there is my love for thee!"

Then her cheeks became red, and her hair golden like the sun.

And she felt that she lived.

And the prince took Snowwhite to his kingdom and made her his queen.

Has she become happy down there in the glorious world?

She has never felt quite at home. She has always stayed a snow-white flower, though her cheeks were red now and her hair golden.

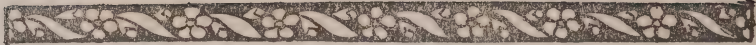
And sometimes when the old dream of spring flowers is passing through her soul, she speaks with True about it, and True understands her.

THE LITTLE RAILROAD.

In Norway, where the bears still live in the dense forests and the giants on the mountains, was a little railroad walking around. She walked very slowly, because she had just arrived, and was not quite used yet to the new tracks. Nature was so grand and wild, so majestic in its beauty, and the railroad was so small and cute, just like a pretty toy. But the people who live in Norway came and looked at it with amazement, because they had never seen such a thing.

"Yes, look at me, said the railroad!" and she made whiffs of steam that were larger than she herself. "Look at me! I did come to make you all civilized. Look in my parlor car, with the velvet cushions and red curtains! Between your bare rocks it is indeed very tiresome to walk; but what will not one do for charity?"

And the little railroad went slowly on. Every moment she



stopped and allowed herself to drink some water, because she saw so much salt-water that it made her thirsty.

But the rocks grew wilder and the passage so narrow that she began to sigh. On the top of a steep rock the king of the giants was just taking his afternoon nap, and he was awakened by the sighing of the little railroad.

"Gracious me!" he said yawning, "what ridiculous little thing is this, walking here through my land! Behaves as if it were a princess, and is not larger than my forefinger. Stop, you odd thing!"

"No, thank you!" said the little railroad. "In an hour I must be at the next station, and the roads here are very miserable indeed!"

The king of the giants grew wild, and stretched out his big hand down to catch her, but the little railroad began to run. Oh, how she could run now!

The giant sat there on his rock and looked after her wondering; he had never seen such rapidity.

Then he fell asleep again and when he awoke he laughed about that odd dream that he had had.

But in the night he awoke again from the "Puff, puff!" of the little railroad. It was just as if she would vex him; her eyes were fairly gleaming with mischievous joy. The giant looked drowsily down from the rock, but then she blew steam in his face, so that he began to cough and his eyes became sore. "Just you wait," grumbled he, "when you come again, you shall not pass alive."

And he gathered some big stones together to have them ready to throw down when she passed.

And really, about noon she dared to come the same way and seemed to be in very good spirits, blowing steam as much as she could.



"I shall put an end to your pleasure!" thundered the king of the giants, and down he flung the big stones. But the little railroad laughed and ran as quickly as she could. And the stones only crushed some poor huts down in the valley.

"Thank you!" said the little railroad. "Oh, how uncivilized you are! I shall make you leave if you do not change!"

And every noon and every night she awoke the king of the giants from his sound sleep, so that he became restless and could not sleep any more. And because he was too old to change and to become civilized, he gave up his throne on the rock and went to the Northcap where there are no railroads yet.

But the little railroad enjoys her life; of course men do not look any more at her as if she was a wonder, and the velvet cushions and curtains in the parlor car are no more so brand new, but all has become civilized, very much civilized, and the little railroad is appreciated.

THE TALE OF THE PRINCE WHO HAD NO HEART.



Once upon a time there was a prince who was looked upon as something abnormal by the people, for they said he had no heart.

No, surely he could not have any heart, for all the charming young ladies at his court had laid their hearts down at his feet to exchange it for his, but he laughingly had passed them, saying: "I have no heart." The prince liked festivals, when he would thoroughly enjoy himself, and among others he arranged one, where



everyone had to appear in the costume of a fool. And on this occasion he proved again that he had no heart, fooling the most dignified people and snatching the masks from the faces of those who dreaded most to be recognized.

At this festival there was a young girl for the first time introduced at the court, and she was so small and modest that nobody seemed to notice her. She was sitting alone in a corner, looking at all the splendor around her and thinking: "Oh, if I could dance, too!"

And just when she was thinking thus, the prince was passing by with the lady of ceremonies, and seeing the little lady sitting all alone in the corner, he said:

"Who is this charming young girl? She has not been introduced to me!"

"Your Excellence will excuse me," said the lady of ceremonies, "but she is so insignificant that I had not noticed her."

"How can one overlook such a lovely child? I had rather dance with her than with you," said the prince, and approaching her he asked her to dance with him, and left the lady of ceremonies alone in all her dignity.

While the court seemed to be stupefied by the behavior of the prince, he did not care, but danced with his little lady all around the hall, and she thought that she was dancing right into heaven, so happy she felt.

And the prince danced the whole evening with her alone, and at the table she had to sit beside him, and he chatted away so pleasantly that she almost forgot he was a prince.

But the ladies of the court carried their noses very high and wondered how the prince would take any trouble with such an insignificant girl.

When dinner was over, there was some music in honor to the prince; but when a lady sang such a sad song that all



began to cry, the prince said to his little lady : " Come, let us go into the park ; it seems so close here."

And he took her hand and led her to the park.

" Look, how bright the moon shines !" said he. " More beautiful than all the lights within ; and listen how sweet the nightingale sings ! much sweeter than all these ladies."

" I wonder that thou shouldst feel it," said the little lady. " For thou, poor prince, hast no heart."

" And thou believest it ?" said the prince and smiled. And he put a precious jewel in her hand, and said softly : " That is my heart. Take good care of it, that never one of the ladies ever find it ; for they do not need to know that I have a heart ; if one shows it to everybody, it loses its value."

And many a good and kind word spoke the prince to the little lady in the bright moonlight. But when they returned in the hall, the lady of ceremonies took the little lady aside, and said : " Beware of the prince. He has no heart !"

But the little lady smiled, and thought of the jewel he had given her. She knew better.

OLD LIBERTY BELL.

Once upon a time there was a little curious fairytale, who wanted to see where all the big ships with so many people were going, and one night when a big steamboat was preparing to leave for the ocean, it sat down on the top of the mast and left too. Splendid it was on the ocean, and a fairy can enjoy it, because she does not get seasick. But the journey came to an end, and the people on board welcomed the land, as if it were the land of the promise.

" I wonder how it will be," thought the curious fairytale, who had seen until now only the lonely seashore, and people



and ships only from a distance. She hid herself behind a great trunk and she was put with other trunks on a large express wagon. Therein she made the long ride over the street pavement and was so shaken up, that she became quite dizzy. She could not escape, either, because she was pinched between the trunks.

“What thing is that!” said the expressman, when he got the trunks down and noticed the white little figure. But the fairytale spread out her wings, gave him a little fillip and escaped. She flew over the great crowded city. It was just evening; people rushed and thronged down there in the bright gaslight. A long, pompous procession moved on through the streets; music with many drums ahead; gentlemen with white hats on, carrying their canes like guns over the shoulder, a flower in the button-hole; girls who carried flowers, and boys who burnt firecrackers and screamed: “Hurrray!”

“I must try to go with them,” thought the curious fairytale, and made herself comfortable on one of the big white hats. And she was herself so white and small, that nobody noticed her. Now the gentlemen, too, screamed, “Hurrray!” and it was such a noise, that the music was entirely drowned in it.

“This is going to be tiresome,” thought the fairytale, when the march seemed never to come to an end; but at last the procession stopped on a free place near the water. There stood, on a throne draped with flags, a gorgeous old bell.

All the gentlemen took their hats off at sight of this old bell, the children put their flowers down on the throne and the flags, which looked withered like the old bell, and all were suddenly silent as if they were in a church. After a while there was a speech made, of which the fairytale did not understand a word, because she had not yet learnt to talk English.



She had left her seat on the white hat and had chosen to sit down right in front of the bell among the flowers, and many thought that they saw a spirit sitting there.

The speech came to an end, and all screamed again : "Hur-
ray !" The gentlemen put their hats on and the train moved slowly back.

But the fairytale was tired and stayed in her place.

"You must be at least a queen !" she said to the old bell,
"because every one makes so much of you."

"We have no kings nor queens in this country !" said the old bell.

"Yes, the country seems to me very strange !" said the fairytale. "For instance I have never seen gentlemen wearing white hats, and some people look quite black in the face. You are also pretty rusty."

"Yes, I am so old !" said the bell.

"Then you can surely tell me, why so many come to this country. I do not think it nice to live in these narrow streets. What do they come for ?"

"Because they find liberty here !"

"And why do they make so much of you ?"

"Because I was the first one who rang for liberty."

"Oh, that is beautiful !" said the fairytale. "Yes, liberty is great and beautiful. But how can she live in such narrow streets ?"

"She is not bound to the place ; she has wings."

"But you do not ring any more for liberty ?" said the fairytale. "I see that you have a crack."

"Yes, I am so old ; my duty is done."

"And yet one honors you so much and covers you with flowers ; not everybody who has done a good work is rewarded like you are. Pray, give me one of your flowers ; then I will

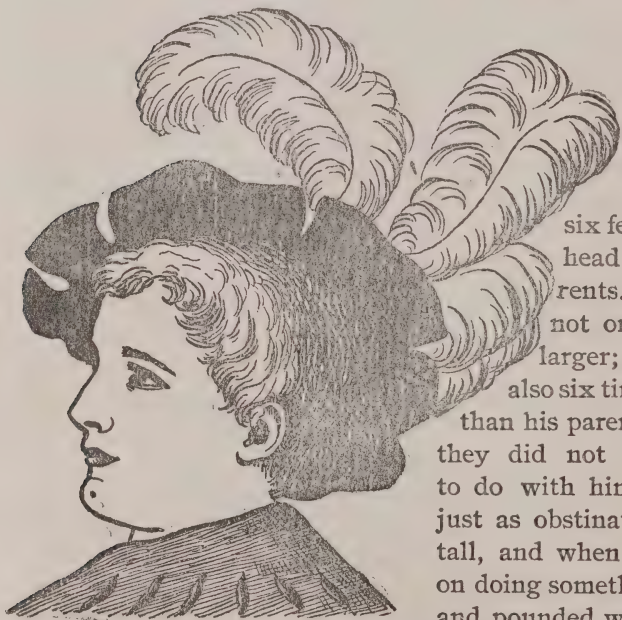


fly back and tell the tale of freedom to all who will listen."

And the Old Liberty Bell gave to the fairytale a flower, which grows free and wild in the woods—America's National flower—Goldenrod!

But the fairytale flew back to the shore of the Northsea and told the tale of the old bell, and thousands listened, and thousands travel over the blue water to the land of promise, the land of Liberty!

THE TALE OF THE GREAT PRINCE.



Once upon a time there was a prince who was so tall that he had grown six feet above the head of his parents. But he was not only six feet larger; his will was also six times stronger than his parents', so that they did not know what to do with him. He was just as obstinate as he was tall, and when he insisted on doing something foolish, and pounded with his big

fist on the table, the whole house trembled, and his parents, too. They thought, therefore, it would be the best thing to



get him married, but it was very difficult to find a girl anywhere near his size.

The tallest ladies of the kingdom were invited to the twentieth birthday of the prince, and hidden in the dining-hall behind a curtain; and when the splendid dinner was almost over, and the prince in good humor because his favorite cake had just been served, his mamma told him that she had still a special, pleasant surprise for him. She went to draw the curtains aside, and there stood all the tallest ladies of the kingdom in their most gorgeous dresses.

"What does this nonsense mean?" said the prince.

"No nonsense, my son," said the queen, soothingly. "You may choose one of these beautiful ladies for your wife."

"I do not think them beautiful," said the great prince; "and, besides, I do not want to marry just now. If I should ever take a wife, she must look very different."

"Well, then, you may look out yourself for one."

"That I will, if I become so old that I think life tiresome; but just now I will go hunting."

In this way spoke the obstinate prince, ate another big piece of his favorite cake, and went hunting. But the woods seemed so lonesome; he saw nothing to shoot, and when the sun was setting he was tired and angry, and turned to go home. As he heard, at some distance, a spring gurgling, and felt thirsty, he went in that direction.

But suddenly he stopped, because, not far from him, he saw a fairy sitting beside a brook. She splashed with her little feet in the water, and seemed to enjoy it very much. The prince coughed, and she looked up, because she thought it thundered. Then she saw the prince. She did not pay any attention to him, but splashed on.

"You will catch a cold," said the prince.



"That will not make any difference to you," saucily answered the little fairy.

Then the prince stretched out his big hand, raised her from the ground, and put her on a rock.

"You are very naughty," said he, after he had carefully dried her feet.

"And you are very rude," said the fairy, and wiped a tear from off her cheek. "My feet burnt so much; I had to walk so far, and am not used to it. I wanted to gather some wild roses, and the thorns have torn my wings; now I cannot fly any more."

"And where do you want to go?" asked the prince.


"To the rose-garden of the king; there I must water the roses before the moon rises; but I do not know how I shall get there."

"I could carry you thither," said the prince, "because my way passes there. Look, my hand is just big enough for you to ride on, and I will carry you carefully."

"Oh, you are better than I thought," said she; and he took her up on his hand. "But now you must hurry, so that we are there in good time."

And the prince hastened as much as he could. But the fairy became sleepy, and complained that her seat was very uncomfortable.

"Will you try it in my waistcoat pocket?" asked the prince. The little fairy was so sleepy that she could scarcely answer, and the prince put her in his waistcoat pocket. There she leaned her little head against his heart, whose beating seemed to her like the ticking of a big watch, and so she fell asleep. When she awoke, she found herself lying on the moss in the rose-garden of the king. Behind the old trees of the park the moon was just rising in all her glory.



She saw the prince was very busy watering the roses. Now he had just done with it, and dried his hands.

"You are very good indeed!" said the little fairy. "I am ashamed that I slept all the time. What can I do to thank you?"

"That I really do not know," said the prince. "But yes— Do you know that my parents want me to marry? You could marry me. You are just what I like, such a pretty little plaything!"

"I should marry you! But will you always be as kind to me as you have been to-day?"

"Yes, you shall have a good time with me," said the Prince. "You shall live in a beautiful castle, and I will get you my favorite cake every day."

The little fairy gave him a butterfly kiss, and said: "All right, I will marry you; but now put me again in your waistcoat pocket; it is cold and damp here on the moss."

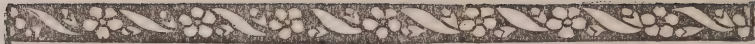
And so the prince walked home, carrying the fairy in his waistcoat pocket. The king and the queen were just through with supper, and welcomed him heartily. But when the prince wanted to speak about his purpose, his heart was beating so loudly that the little fairy awoke on account of it. At last he had enough courage to say that he had now found just the one he would like to marry.

"Very well, my son," said his mamma; "but I hope she is pretty tall."

"No, she is only a little bit of a thing, and that is just what I like," said the prince; and he took the little fairy out of his waistcoat pocket and put her on the table.

His parents were so frightened that they could not speak for a while. At last his mamma said:

"How? Such a little plaything you want to take for



your wife? Never shall we, and never shall anyone, regard her as a princess!"

When the little fairy heard this, she began to weep bitterly; and if she had still had her wings, she would have escaped at once.

"And now she shall be the more my wife!" said the prince, angrily. And the next day he invited all his friends, and held his wedding. But the little fairy was not happy; she wept the whole day through. "Oh, if I were only taller!" complained she, when she was sitting on his shoulder and whispering in his ear.

"Then I would not think you pretty any more," said the prince.

"But just think, nobody will regard me as the princess! Oh, if I only could reach unto your heart! I would do all I could, if I could only grow so tall."

"You would do all?" said a small voice, which only the fairy heard. "Could you also give up the possibility of ever flying again? You know in a year your wings will have grown again; then you are free, and you can go wherever you like. But if you burn your wings out, so that they never will grow again, then you will grow until you reach to your husband's heart."

The little fairy shivered, because she knew well how much it would hurt to burn her wings out, and how sad it would be never to fly again. But yet she loved the prince more than her freedom, and so she went and burnt out her wings. As soon as she had done so, she began to grow, and in a short time she was so tall that she reached unto the heart of the prince.

All paid homage to her now as the princess, but her husband still calls her his fairy, and from him she likes to hear it.



THE CURIOSITIES OF PORTSMOUTH.

Once upon a time there were some curiosities in Portsmouth, of which people like to talk about to-day. There was a horse which refused the most delicious hay for the pleasure of eating dust; a goat, which ate nothing but newspapers, and a cat that was in reality no cat. She was not one of the smooth, pretty cats, with velvety paws, but she had so trained herself to perfection that she seemed to be above the others and would no more converse with other cats. She had done with all the good and bad qualities of a cat, but with all that she had not accomplished much; while her associates considered her very conceited, people saw in her nothing more than a common cat. She even had no home where she was cared for and looked rather haggard, as she had to hunt for country mice to make a living. One day she went to see the famous horse and goat, which were then shown in Portsmouth as something extraordinary. There were some strangers, looking in amazement at the horse and goat, which lived so differently from others, and yet seemed to prosper. The strangers seemed to be puzzled most, that a horse could live on dust; that the goat was feeding on news, was not so very strange. They only wondered how she could stand it.

When they were gone the cat said to the horse: "They are right; you have a very strange taste. I can force myself to eat grass, but dust—"

"I do not eat it because I like it!" said the horse; "only on account of my health. If I feed on dust, I shall never be returned to dust. I shall be an immortal horse. If mankind would live from dust, they would be immortal, too."

"I do not believe in that!" said the goat. "But one must be something extraordinary. I have not a special preference



for newspapers, and in spring I just long to eat some fresh grass ; yet I withstand the temptation, for one must try to do differently from others, to be admired."

"I, too, am something extraordinary !" said the cat ; "I have reached a rare point of perfection !"

"You do not look so !" replied the goat ; "and, by the way, a perfect animal is generally considered stupid. If you had lots of faults, one would call you perhaps original. Anyhow you must do something that attracts attention, and that no cat has ever done before."

"Oh, I cannot get myself to eat dust or paper !"

"Do not meddle in our business !" said the horse and the goat ; "as far as dust and paper are considered there is no chance for you !"

Then the cat went away, and lying down in the bright sunshine she considered what she could do that no cat had done before. Not far from her was a little girl playing with a dog, And seeing a piece of cake offered to him he sat up on his hind legs, tried to keep balance and moved his two front paws in an imploring manner.

"That I will learn !" resolved the cat. And it was not even hard for her to learn it.

She stealthily glided into the next house, where the family were just enjoying dinner, and sitting down near the table, she did just the same as she had seen the dog do.

"Look at that cat !" exclaimed the one who noticed her first. "Have you ever seen a cat sitting up in that manner ? This is wonderful indeed !" Everyone seemed bewildered. They kept her in the house, and in time found many admirable qualities about her, not to be found in any other cat. Soon the whole town spoke of her and she was placed with the horse and the goat as something remarkably strange.

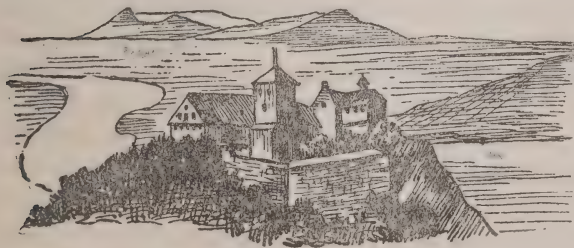
When she had lived thus for quite awhile, well fed and much admired, she said to her companions: "I get tired of this life, and the nature of a cat begins to stir in me again. I should like to walk on top of the roofs in the moonlight, or to hunt a bird. Let us all go for an evening stroll on this delightful night in May!"

The horse and goat were doubtful first, but at last decided to go along with her. "I know some meadows with the most tender grass!" said the cat. "What do you think if I should lead you there?"

"In fact, we should be delighted to smell some grass again!" said both the horse and the goat. And the cat lead the way to the meadows. As soon as they had arrived there, the temptation for horse and goat proved too strong, for they began not only to smell, but to eat the grass. But not being used to this kind of food any more, both were seized by the most terrible pains; notwithstanding they could not stop eating; they ate and ate, until they were dead.

Meanwhile the cat had indulged in her freedom and succeeded in hunting a bird; and seeing the tragic end of her companions she realized how much danger there is in pretending to be something extraordinary, and decided to be from that time on nothing more than a common cat.

THE SUNKEN CASTLE.



She was a capricious princess and tormented by her changing moods all who lived around her. Every day



she wanted something different and there was no one who was able to suit her.

She had a handsome young page, who was so much in love with her, that he did everything she wanted, but though he was her favorite she treated him worst of all.

One day when she was taking a walk with him in the wild woods, she saw a wonderful flower bending right over an abyss, and she sent her young page to pick it for her.

He knew that to get this flower from the dangerous spot meant death for him, but he would even die in the true service of his mistress, and so he went to get it. When he was approaching the dark abyss, he felt himself drawn back by a soft hand. It was a good fairy who thus saved him from death. She took him under her shining veil, and pointing solemnly to the distant castle, she disappeared with her burden.

In a moment, while the fairy was pointing to the castle, it disappeared with a thundering crash, and a dense forest began to cover the ground where it had stood. The princess found herself lost in the wild forest, and wandering around for some days she finally came to the seashore. She could not realize that her beautiful castle should be lost forever, and more than that she wished to find her page again, for in the very moment when he seemed lost, she felt how much she loved him, and how wicked she had been to him. Not caring if she was to live or die, she took a fisher boat, which she found at the shore, and trusted herself to the ocean. But the fairy who had taken her page from her protected her boat in the storm and made it land at Norway's lonely, rocky shore.

There was nothing but ice and snow around, the sea-gulls started frightened from their nests, and nowhere was a house to be seen.

The poor princess hid in a crevice of a rock; she was tired



to death. Not far from her was an old grave of a giant, and when the midnight sun was rising in all his glory, the grave opened with a crash and the giant came forth. He looked like an image of stone, and his long white beard reached to the ground.

The princess folded her tiny hands, and said: "Canst thou not give me a shelter?"

The giant silently led her into a dark room beneath the rocks and pointed to a soft bed made of sea-gull feathers, where she sank down at once and fell asleep.

When she awoke, after a short rest, which had given her wonderful strength, she saw the giant busy polishing his rusty armour. The flickering light of a torch seemed to lend some life to his ghostly appearance. When he saw her awake, he took a drinking horn down from the wall, filled it with sweet gooseberry wine, and held it to her lips that she might drink.

"Thou must feel thirsty, I suppose," said he, kindly; "and this is a nice wine; it is from a shipwrecked boat that was to go to Bergen. And now I will get thee something to eat." He proceeded to get some herrings and hard old bread, and watched how she seemed to enjoy this plain meal.

When she had finished, he said: "Now, thou must tell me how thou happened to come here." And the princess told him that she intended to go all over the world to find her castle again, which had disappeared from the place where it stood, and to find her beloved page, too, to make up for the wrong she had done him.

"I should like to help thee," said the old giant, "for thou art brave. But I am bound to this room and my grave. I know that on one of these rocky islands there is a beautiful castle buried since centuries. Every hundred years, one night



in June, the midnight sun shines right in the keyhole, and if thou putttest in the key then and turn it, the most beautiful castle will come up from the rocky ground. I am sure it is much more beautiful than thine has ever been; and it might be that the fairy brings thy favorite back to thee, if she sees that thou hast suffered for his sake and art worthy of him."

"But where can I find the key?" asked the princess eagerly.

"I know where it is, but it is hard to get; almost too hard for thee, frail and delicate as thou art."

"O tell me; I will try it."

"The giant of the mountains, the guardian of the rushing waters, keeps it; his name is Noek. He sits on a high throne near the water and sings the most beautiful songs. Whoever hears him sing forgets to look out for the way, and find their death in the water. If thou wilt climb up to his throne without forgetting thy purpose, if strong by that purpose, thou wilt not let his melodies master thee; he has to give thee whatever thou mayest ask him."

"I will try!" said the princess. "I have gone so far, now I must keep on. If thou wilt only show me the way!"

And the giant pointed to a steep rock from which a wild mountain stream was tumbling down.

"Thou must keep near the water," he said; and the princess thanked him, and parted from her kind friend.

She began to climb the steep and slippery rock; her little feet slipped often and often, but she held on with her hands. While the spray from the waterfall was covering her delicate form, she climbed bravely upward. And like the grand tones of an organ the song of Noek filled the air.

"Go back!" it seemed to warn her in the song, and in the overwhelming roar of the water.



"Go back, poor creature, born of dust ! Why dost thou climb up to powers that will crush thee ? Go back !"

"I can not go back any more," said the trembling princess to herself, and kept on to the dizzy height. And the roaring song changed into the sweetest, softest complaint. In the transparent veil which rose from the water she seemed to see her page bending over the abyss to pick the wonderful flower. Must she not keep him back ? No ; on, to the dizzy height far above.

The song now changed to a song of love and filled her soul with unknown delights. There in the glittering water she saw her castle ; there in the glittering water she saw all that ever had been dear to her, and it beckoned her to come. But still she kept on climbing to the heights, and at last she reached it. The giant Noek was sitting there on his mighty throne, just as grand and powerful as his song had been in the beginning. But he leaned his harp against the rock and smiled.

"Thou frail, little thing !" he said, "thou hast succeeded where many a one much stronger than thou has failed. Whatever thou art going to ask from me, I will give it to thee."

And the princess asked the key for the sunken castle, and he gave it to her.

"But thou must hurry," said he, "for there are only six hours left until midnight."

And she glided down the dangerous rock, and in these six hours returned to the shore. Making a last effort with all her strength, she rowed over with her tired arms to the island, where from the dark rock something seemed to shine like gold. She tried the key there, turned it, and in the glow of the midnight sun the most beautiful castle rose from the ground.

Breaking down on the threshold, the princess was caught

in the arms of her true and beloved page, whom she never ill-treated again.

HOW KNIGHT FRANK HAPPENED TO BECOME A DREAMER.



"I will no longer carry thy train!" said the boy Frank, when the queen made ready to go to church.

The queen dropped her prayer book in astonishment, and looked at Frank as he stood there, pretty with his pouting mouth, and blushing in his anger.

"And why?" said the queen, puzzled with wonder. "Because I am no more a boy."

The queen smiled and said :

"If thou dost think thyself too old to be my page and to carry the train of my dress, I shall have to dismiss thee until thou dost return as a knight. But where wilt thou go?"

"I should like to make a little sail-boat and go out in it for adventures," said Frank.

"But the sea is so immense, and thy little boat might tip over."

"I am not afraid!" said Frank.

"Well, I will give thee the wood for thy boat," said the queen kindly. "And from my old white silk dress thou canst make the sail."



"You are very kind," said Frank. "And as soon as I have become a knight, I shall return to you."

In two days Frank had finished his sail-boat. It looked so delicate and frail, like a pretty toy, but how should it stand the storms of the ocean? In the evening while the queen was taking a walk by the seashore, she was struck by the same thought. She ordered her companions home, and as soon as she found herself alone, she called a sea-giant who was rocking himself on a wave.

"I want thee to carry my page in this boat to the shore where the fairy of the tales lives. There thou break his boat and leave him until he has become a knight. Then carry him back in thy arms to my castle!"

The next morning Frank sailed in his boat out on the wide ocean. On his cap sparkled an emerald from the crown of the queen. But he did not think of her any more; the ocean with its vastness, with its ever-changing splendor, filled all his senses. A good wind was with him, and his boat glided over the long, smooth waves like a swan. But after a few days a storm came up; the waves roared, and raged, and though Frank felt the magnificence and the grandeur of this storm, he saw that his boat was lost. It took not long, indeed, until it was crushed to a thousand pieces; was it the storm or the giant who broke it? The white sail of the queen fluttered above the waves like the garment of a mermaid, and Frank was thrown unconscious upon the shore.

When he came to his senses, the sun was just rising above the ocean; around him were scattered the pieces of his boat. The morning was fresh and beautiful. Along the shore spread a forest of gorgeous trees; the leaves were purple and golden yellow and still moist with rain, so that they sparkled in the sun like rubies and gold.



"How beautiful!" said Frank, and he took a long, deep breath. "Here I should like to live!" and he rested his eyes with delight upon the shore and the blue ocean. "How beautiful!" he said once more. "I am glad to be on land again. For the present I have enough of the ocean. I guess I will go and look for some adventures." And Frank went into the dense forest, where there was no path, where the dainty autumn asters grew so high that they touched his cheek. But suddenly Frank found himself before a castle with towers and bay windows; it was not built of stone, but of branches, and all covered with ruby and yellow leaves, only the entrance was encircled by a heavy growth of ivy. There was not the slightest noise inside of this strange building; everything seemed to sleep. Frank silently crossed the threshold. The leaves of the branches which formed the ceiling whispered as if they had many a story to tell. The first room which Frank entered was almost dark. A sweet perfume of violets and roses filled the air; in the large grate was fire beginning to sink into ashes. In the dim light of this fire he saw a figure sitting, wrapped in a black veil; she seemed asleep. It is time to wake up, thought Frank, and said, with his fresh voice, "Good morning!"

There was a tremor passing through the figure; then it seemed motionless again.

"This is very strange," thought Frank, "and the perfume is intoxicating. I would rather go again into the woods." But when he returned to the hall, he saw there a strange company sitting at the table. There were knights with long white beards, and ladies who must have once been beautiful, in costumes of bygone times.

An immense piece of roasted venison was on the table and a grey-haired man served the wine in a large drinking horn.



"Thou art just in time!" said the knight, who was presiding at the table. "Come to our breakfast. We love youth; how long it seems since my daughter had a pretty page to carry her falcon when we went hunting!"

As Frank felt hungry, he did not wait for another invitation, and sat down.

He did honor to the splendid dish of game, and emptied the drinking horn to the health of the far-off queen, while the lady at his side looked at him with curious eyes.

But as soon as Frank had drank the wine, his senses became so bewildered. The knights and ladies seemed to become young, there was nothing strange any more in their attire, but his life as far as he could think of it, seemed to vanish like a dream.

After dinner he went hunting with the knights, and carried the falcon of the knight's daughter, and all seemed to be perfectly natural.

But when he came back in the evening, and again entered the hall, his company vanished suddenly before his eyes, and he found himself alone.

A bright firelight led him again into the mystic room where he had been that very morning. By the now gayly crackling fire there sat still the same veiled figure, but the veil appeared soft and white, and on the veiled head shone a bright star.

The figure pointed to a footstool near her, and Frank sat down.

"Who art thou?" asked he.

"I am the fairy of the tales."

"Oh, I know thee!" said Frank. "I have known thee as long as I can remember. Tell me again one of thy sweet tales."

And he put his golden-haired head on the fairy's lap, and



she told him her own story; how she was banished here into a strange forest, and how she was longing and waiting for her redemption.

"Could not I redeem thee?" asked Frank, when she had finished.

"Yes, thou couldst; but it is difficult."

"Oh, tell me how; I will try."

"If thou wilt be company to my guardians, the knights, every day, and if thou wilt sit at my feet every night, until the moon is full."

"Ah, that is nothing!" said Frank. "That is just what I like!"

"But it is not all," said the fairy of the tales. "Thou must never lift my veil, and thou dare not kiss me, even if I should ask thee to do so."

"I am sorry!" said Frank. "For I am very curious to see thy face. But if it cannot be otherwise, and if I may kiss thee after thy redemption, I can wait until the moon is full."

Every day now Frank went hunting with the knights, and every night he was sitting at the feet of the fairy; and resting his head in the soft folds of her garment, he fell asleep.

One night he dreamt that he held the fairy in his arms and kissed her.

He awoke; the fire in the grate was almost out, and the cold, pale moonlight covered the figure of the fairy.

"I dreamt that I kissed thee," said he.


"Why dost thou not?" asked the fairy softly.

"But thou forbade it to me, and the moon is not full yet."

"Until the moon is full I might be gone. Lift my veil and kiss me."

"But my dear, sweet fairy, I would not redeem thee then!"

"Thou lovest me not!" said the fairy sadly.



Then Frank lifted the veil and kissed her.

The fire in the grate suddenly leaped up ; a large flame stretched out towards the light figure of the fairy and encircled it. In the glaring light he saw the large sad eyes of the fairy resting on his face. The fire sank into darkness and he found himself alone in the cold, pale moonlight.

He rushed out of the castle to the seashore. There trembled a flake of white foam before the approaching waves of the ocean. When he came nearer, he thought he recognized the garment of the fairy, and again he saw her large sad eyes shining from it.

They beckoned him farther and farther out into the water.

Suddenly he felt himself lifted up by strong arms and carried away.

It was the sea-giant who carried him back to the castle of the queen.

The boy Frank had become a knight, and honors and dignities were bestowed upon him.

But he had become a dreamer, and not one of the court ladies could win his heart. In lonely woods and on the waves of the ocean he was looking for what he had lost.

For whoever has kissed the fairy tales' lips, can never forget her.





DIGGY.



Once upon a time there was a little girl, who was left all alone in the wide world. Her name was Diggy; and when she was just as far advanced in school that she could read and write, her guardians said to her: "Now look out for yourself; we can do nothing for you from now on." It was a cold and crisp winter day. Diggy wrapped her apron around her little hands and walked as fast as she could out into the wide world. And in walking along the woods and fields she enjoyed the splendor of winter as it had never been presented to her before. And where the woods seemed wonderful, glittering in snow and ice, she happened to meet a handsome prince.

"Where art thou going?" asked the prince.

"I do not know!" said Diggy. "I am going to seek a home."

"Poor little girl," said the prince, "to be left alone amid ice and snow. Hast thou no one to protect thee?"

"God will protect me."

"But I am so sorry for thee!" said the prince. "I will go with thee and help thee to find a home."

And he wrapped her in his warm coat, and so they walked on together.

They had not gone far, when the snow began to melt; and the air seemed filled with a foreboding of spring, and the further they went, the more beautiful it was. The woods were covered with the first delicate green, sweet spring flowers covered the ground, the birds were singing, and hand in hand the two



wandered on amid the wonders of the Spring. And more and more handsome became the young prince, and Diggy looked at him, her eyes wide open with wonder. But he kissed her, and said: "I am the Spring. Here is my realm; here thou shalt live and be happy."

And Diggy stayed in the wonderful land of Spring. She played with the flowers, listened to the song of the nightingale, and to the tales which the elfs told her in the gentle nights of May. She lived in perfect happiness and did not think that her life would ever change.

But one misty morning the Spring stood before her and said: "Farewell, I must depart. Summer will come now and take my place. I loved thee and sometime I shall meet thee again; tell me what I can give thee which you will remember me by."

"Thy flowers!" said Diggy, and anxiously stretched out her little hands. The Spring filled her hands with his sweetest flowers.

"But they will fade soon!" said he.

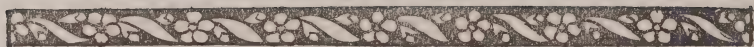
"Is there nothing else I could give thee?"

"The nightingale!"

"Yes, you will remember me by him!" said the Spring, and the nightingale flew on Diggy's shoulder and sang his sad, sweet song; but the Spring kissed Diggy and departed

All seemed to be changed after his departure; large and splendid flowers grew where the dainty Spring flowers had covered the ground, the air was hot and oppressive, and scarcely a bird sang. But Diggy sat by the brook and played with the last Spring flowers.

In a splendid carriage the Summer passed by. "What art thou doing here?" asked he, and the flowers in her hand faded from the hot breath of Summer.



"I play with my flowers," said Diggy sadly.

"This is not the time to play and to dream!" said the Summer severely. "Thou shalt work if thou wilt live. I give thee this piece of land; take care, that it brings fruit to thee when the Autumn comes."

And Diggy threw the faded flowers in the brook and learned to work. It seemed hard, because she was not used to it. The days seemed long and weary, but evenings the nightingale perched on her shoulder and sang of Spring, and she closed her eyes and dreamt of him.

Soon Autumn came and rewarded her work, by bringing her the most luscious fruit, and when Autumn passed, then came the cold and gloomy winter. And she thought, how she, once forsaken and alone, started out on a cold winter day, and how she met the Spring in the snowy woods.

And now she had found a home. She was sitting in her own little house, heard the storm blow, and was happy.

For still ever sang the nightingale; he sang of Spring, how beautiful he was, and that he was coming to meet her again by the Eternal Laws.

HECTOR.

Poor Hector! He did not have a big share of the enjoyments of other dogs. From his mother, a greyhound, he had gotten his jolly temper, a rather careless disposition, and the strong instinct to stroll around in the fields and woods. And with this longing for freedom he was condemned to live in the narrow streets of the city!

And not enough with that!

As the city was dirty, and Hector's natural color was snow-white, he was led along by a chain to keep him from getting into dirt and mischief. Poor Hector! Because he was very



much like his father in appearance, who had been a bulldog, he was taken generally for a dangerous dog and people avoided him on the street, and were scared when he, in the joy of his heart, and because he wished to make friends with everyone, jumped up to greet them.

“Look at the bulldog !” How often he heard this remark, though he wagged his tail merrily, to show that he was no bulldog. His mistress was a capricious little girl. Nice food, a soft carpet, and a walk twice a day held by the chain, these were the enjoyments of this dog, who was born for liberty.

As he did not know how to do anything better, he slept the whole day long and dreamed of green meadows and gatherings of dogs, and when he sighed very deeply in his dream, his little mistress pulled his ears and awoke him. Then he put his head on her lap and wagged his tail, as if he were the most happy dog on earth. When his mistress was capricious, she would hold the perfume bottle under his nose, though she knew that he would become seasick at it, or she would show him a delicate piece of cake and then eat it herself ; once she had painted on him dark eyebrows and a mustache and as the paint would not come off again, the poor Hector had to show himself as a caricature until the paint was worn off.

One evening she had wrapped him in an old flag, and had great fun seeing him so ridiculously dressed. Hector, good-natured as he was, had at first participated in her pleasure by wagging his tail under the flag, but as this proved to be very inconvenient, and he could not, in spite of his efforts, get rid of the strange garment, he began to feel offended, and when the bell rang and the little girl went to open the door, he made the best of the opportunity and escaped. Off he ran, and in vain his mistress called him. She felt like crying, though he made quite a funny picture as he was running off in that old, torn



flag. And he ran as fast as he could, dragging one end of the flag behind him. People who met him thought to behold a ghost, and dogs that were late on the street tried to avoid him. At last he was out of town and reached the fields, and the flag had been caught by a rosebush. He took it easy now and rested awhile. "Look at the bulldog!" he heard a sweet little voice say. He wondered that he was even here regarded as a bulldog.

Wagging his tail he looked upward, where the voice came from. Then he saw two elf-like fairies sitting on the branches, who seemed to be much afraid of him.

"I shall not do you any harm!" barked Hector. "I am the most good-natured fellow you can imagine."

"But thou dost look as if thou would bite us!"

"Mercy! You are much too thin for that, and besides, I only bite on solemn occasions. You can have a ride on my back if you like to."

Then a multitude of elfs approached and sat down on Hector's back.

That was a lovely ride across the meadows! When they had enough of it, the fairies said: "Please stay with us! We just need someone to protect us against the dwarfs. They come every night and steal our flowers, and it is useless on our part to fight against them, as they are so much stronger than we."

Hector was not very courageous, and he looked rather doubtful. "I do not like to bite," said he. "And I might by accident kill one."

"Oh, you look so terribly cross that you will have just to bark to frighten them off."

"That I shall be glad to do. I like to bark. But now give me something to eat, please."



Then the fairies brought dew from the flowers and the sweetest honey, but Hector smelled at it contemptuously.

"This is no food for me! Have you not some real bones for my supper?"

"Oh, no, we have no such things!"

"Well, then, I'll have to eat one of the dwarfs. Ah, there they come. We had better hide behind the trees."

Slowly and carefully the dwarfs approached, but suddenly Hector jumped from behind the trees and began to bark fearfully.

"Look at the bulldog!" screamed the dwarfs, and escaped as quickly as they could.

But Hector, who felt himself in this moment a perfect bulldog, followed them and caught the smallest one by the tail of his coat. He clinched his teeth fearfully and barked: "You are just the right morsel for me; I am very hungry."

"Oh, let me live!" entreated the prisoner. "I am the king of the dwarfs. I can give thee immense treasures, precious jewels."

"From such things I do not get any satisfaction," said Hector.

"Or you can have a fried rabbit, which the cook is just preparing for us," whined the dwarf.

"That is a good bargain!" said Hector. "A fried rabbit is a better food than you. Where is it?"

"There in the cave, to which you see the other dwarfs hurrying."

"Climb on my back!" said Hector. "We shall be there in a moment."

When both arrived in the cave, the frightened dwarfs jumped on the tables and chairs, screaming:

"The bulldog!"

But the king said: "This is a very amiable dog. He will not do us any harm ; he will just eat our fried rabbit."

Hector with his fine nose had found the rabbit at once and made haste to swallow it. And as he felt always courageous when he saw someone afraid of him, he said grimly:

"I would swallow all of you, if you were more appetizing. But if you will leave the flowers of the fairies alone, and if you will have a nice supper ready for me every night, I will let you live."

Then the dwarfs promised all he wanted, and kept their promise ; but Hector stayed with the fairies.

And if you, kind reader, should go out in the moonlight over the meadows, and meet with a white bulldog, do not be afraid. It is Hector, the friend and guardian of the fairies.

PRINCESS EDELTRAUT.



Once upon a time there was a princess who, when but a child was placed on a throne. As she was too young to look after the affairs of her kingdom she had to select ministers to do it for her. Soon the castle was crowded with ministers who offered their services to Princess Edeltraut, for it was very tempting to govern a large and beautiful kingdom, and perhaps the princess, too.

The princess declared that after a year she would decide whom of the ministers she thought most worthy to assist her in the government. And as she was but a child, she took all the advantages of being a princess and treated her ministers the same as she would treat toys. After the year had thus



passed she had to declare which of the suitors she preferred, and being unable to decide in favor of one, she kept four to share the honor of advising and protecting her. Yet of these four she loved one best; but that she did not tell. These four ministers had to promise, then, that they would love and cherish the princess beyond everything, which, they declared, was a matter of course. Furthermore they had to promise never to propose to the princess to marry her; which they considered a rather hard case and reflected awhile. But after all they gave that promise too, for they thought in time they would overcome the scruples of the princess. For they were only ministers, with the intention of wedding the princess, and so become kings. Only one did not think so, and that was the one whom she loved most.

In the beginning everything seemed bright and gay and the princess felt satisfied beyond expression, being thus loved and cherished, and having every wish fulfilled. But soon the ministers began to bother her with jealousy, for everyone would have the first place in her heart; but she preferred no one.

The first one complained: "How can I love thee beyond everything and be true to thee, if I have to share thy kind feelings with three others? Send the others away, and thou wilt see that I am thy true and faithful slave."

The second and the third minister spoke in the same way. Only the last one did not speak thus, and that was the one she loved most. He had dark, dreamy eyes, and liked to sing beautiful, melancholy songs.

One day when he was sitting at her feet and just concluded a song, she said: "What beautiful dark curls thou hast! It just tempts me to wind them around my fingers."

"Well, thou mayest play with my hair," said the young minister, "if thou wilt only not play with my heart!"



The princess began to wind his hair around her soft and pretty fingers. "How dare I play with thy heart?" said she.

"Dost thou not so with others?" asked the young minister seriously. "Like my hair thou windest all around thy fingers, and all must obey thy caprices. It was but thy caprice that we had to promise love and faithfulness."

"Oh, now thou dost begin to talk exactly like the others!" said the princess impatiently. "This I am told every day; oh, I am very unfortunate!"

And she began to cry bitterly.

He took her hands down and looked in her face.

"Why dost thou look at me thus?" sighed Edeltraut, trembling with a soft emotion.

"I just thought how sweet it must be to kiss the tears from thine eyes!" said he. "But I dare not, for I am nothing more than your minister."

"Yes, and therefore please do not look at me any longer."

"But I love thee so."

"Oh, really, thou lovest me?" said the princess. "The others have told me often and often, but thou never didst. Now wait; thou must write that down in my golden book, that I may be sure of it." And she took a beautiful golden book from the table and opened it.

"Look how many have written here how much they love me; thou must do so too!"

"No," said he. "If I were permitted to do as I feel, I should tear this book to pieces, showing thee, in acting thus, that I will be all to thee or nothing."

"Oh, why dost thou hurt my feelings by speaking so?" said the princess. "Thou art not better than all the others, and I will not see thee any more."

The next day the poor young minister was banished.



But after a few days the first minister came and said: "If thou wilt not decide to marry me, I will not stay any longer at thy court."

And she dismissed him.

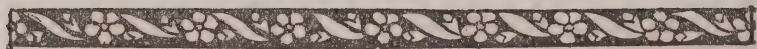
And the second and third minister came to tell her the same, and she found herself without any minister, for she did not like to bid the one return whom she had sent away. And as she did not understand how to rule so large a kingdom by herself, it was taken from her, and she found herself poor and all alone in the wide world. As she was sitting crying one cold and dark winter night, she felt a soft breath touching her cheek. It was her favorite who bent over her, the young minister whom she had sent into banishment; he had not gone far, however.

"Now I may kiss the tears from thy cheeks, for now thou art no more a queen," said he. "Now I can prove how much I love thee. I know a realm where reigns eternal spring. There I will abide with thee, if thou lovest me enough to accompany me."

And she went with him into the land of eternal spring—of true love.

THE TALE OF THE PRINCE WHO LOST HIS SOUL.

Once upon a time there was a prince who was very careless and light-minded. He had squandered all his possessions, and his friends had helped him to get rid of them, and when his creditors came to take his golden bed as the last piece that he owned, he locked the door of his palace, and said with a laugh: "May rats and mice live here from now. I go into the wide world." But when he passed the park, he saw there his little sister sitting in the grass; he had entirely forgotten about her. She had her hands full of spring flowers, and looked at him merrily. But he acted as if he were not sure of her, and tried



to pass with quick steps. Then she called him, and when he did not seem to hear her, she dropped the flowers and tried to catch him, and took hold of his hand.

"Where are you going?"

"Into the wide world."

"And you will surely take me along?"

"No, you have to stay here."

"And what shall become of me, all alone?"

"I do not know."

Then his little sister began to cry and to implore him that he should not forsake her, but he was obstinate and cold, and when she clasped her arms round him, he threw her off, so that she fell unconscious on the road. At the same moment it seemed to the prince as if he heard a rustling in the air, and as if his cheeks were touched by a pair of wings; but he did not pay any attention to it, neither to his little sister, but hastened away from his lost property. But strange it was, he suddenly felt such a poverty, such a vacuity in himself, as if he had lost something precious, yet he did not know what.

As he had nothing to live off and was too proud to beg, he went to sea as a sailor, and hoped to find there again his free and light heart. And he seemed to succeed because all liked him on account of his good and jolly temper. No one was as pleasant in company as he, and none so brave in danger; but when he was all alone by himself, he felt this emptiness; it was like a dark, gaping abyss, a darkness without an end—death in the midst of life. And one night the terror before this endless darkness became so great, that he left his berth, and looked for a place on the ship where it was silent and dark, and then he let himself glide into the water. He thought to make an end of this dread, but mermaids caught him in their arms and carried him to the palace of the queen of the shells. She



used to change all the souls who sought rest at the bottom of the sea into shells, and there they sang in low, sad melodies, the story of their lives and the hope of a redemption.

"I can never transform you!" said the beautiful queen of the shells to the prince, "because you have no soul. You belong to us." Then the prince felt that it became lighter in that deep, deep darkness; he knew now that he had lost his soul, and in the same moment he felt the intense desire to find his soul again.

The queen of the shells laughed, when he spoke to her about it. "You are much happier without a soul," said she.

"But is there no hope that I can find it again?" asked the prince sadly.

"Yes; if there is someone on earth who weeps for your lost soul, then you would find it again."

"Ah, there is no longer any one on earth who would shed a tear for me!"

"Yet you may try it!" said the queen of the shells. "A hundred thousand miles from here is a large rock in the ocean; there flutter all the lost souls and wait for redemption. There also your soul must be; but if only some one on earth weeps for you, will it recognize you; then it will take you on its wings, and carry you to the place where you will find rest. I will give you a carriage of shells, which can bring you thither, for I pity you, you poor, restless prince! And if of all the thousand souls there is no one who recognizes you, you may come back to me."

Then the prince left her, to seek his soul. And he traveled a year before he came to the rock, to which all the lost souls were bound. That was a high rock off at the Northcap. Like the north light that appears in fantastic, changeable phantoms on the sky, so appeared the souls to him, as an airy, always

changing phantom, and if he had not heard the sighs of complaint, he would have taken them for a waning mist.

By thousands they gathered round him, and returned then with louder complaints, and the prince stared hopelessly on that rock of snow and ice, and every drop of his blood seemed to become ice, too.


But then he felt himself suddenly lifted up and carried off in a quick flight, and a sweet sense of rest and happiness came over him. It was his soul who had taken him on its wings, and flew with him far over the ocean and far over the land until they reached the house where his sister lived. She opened wide the doors and wide her heart for him, and tears of joy and sorrow dropped down on his pale face.

"Now you will find rest," whispered his soul, closed with a kiss his eyes, and flew redeemed to heaven.

THE POOR COWBOY.



Once upon a time there was a little cowboy, who was so poor that he had scarcely enough clothes to cover himself. His parents were dead and he had to take care of the farmers' cows to make a living. Every one pitied him as a poor and



lonely boy ; yet he was rich and happy ; for he had a cheerful heart and a fine sense for everything that was beautiful.

When he lay stretched out on the meadow, when the sun was setting and the old willows seemed to whisper strange stories in the twilight, he felt deeply the charm of these hours.

He had to sleep in the barn and when the moon shone through the broken window, his fancy did not allow him to sleep; but he would get up and go out to the beach, sit down under the white, slender birch tree and look into the glittering water, or up to the brilliant sky.

One night when he was again approaching the birch tree, he found that it had been transformed into a fair figure, just as white and just as slender as the tree had been before. There was something sweet and touching in the whole apparition—something so innocent and childlike.

The little cowboy looked at her with wondering eyes. "Who art thou?" asked he.

The delicate figure took his hand and said : "I am the poetry—the poetry of thy country. I must hide in the daytime; for the farmers do not like me. I only go sometimes to see the old minister. I know he is kind to thee, too."

"Yes," said the poor boy, and his eyes brightened up. "If he comes across the meadow he has always a kind word for me. No one else is kind to me."

"I know it," said the poetry; "and I am sorry for thee. And because thou art alone I will bid thee company and play with thee. I will be thy friend, and if all forsake thee, I will be true to thee. Take and keep these flowers; whenever thou look upon them with the desire to see me, I will come, wherever thou be."

Thus speaking, she put a bunch of flowers in his hand and vanished in the moonshine.



But she came almost every night, and told him tales, that were as deep and wonderful as her eyes. Yes, it was she who made the poor boy happy, though he was wanting of everything that others needed for happiness.

If he had not been born in so poor a hut, if the work that was in store for him had not been of the hardest, he might have become a poet, for a poet lived within him.

There was an end to the happy dreams when he grew older; he had to work hard and seldom saw his fair friend. Struggling for life he became a man. But still he kept his cheerful heart and stood steadfast and brave in the storm of life. This storm took him away from the country to the crowded city. Love and wealth were not meant for him. He sacrificed his life to his brother and his only child.

Whenever he longed for the companion of his youth, for the poetry of his country, he found her true, his best, his dearest friend.

And after all the hard work and struggle of his life, death appeared before him one night as a kind redeemer. He sent him the friend of his childhood, the poetry of his life. She took his feverish hand and seemed so quiet and serious.

"What dost thou bring me?" asked he.

"Eternal rest!" whispered she.

"But there is one whom I must leave all alone!" said he; "my brother's only child. Promise me that thou wilt not forsake her. Thou hast helped me to overcome so much, that without thee would have proved too hard; and she is only a tender girl. Promise me that thou wilt not forsake her!"

"I promise thee!" said the poetry, and with her soft veil hid the solemn face of death that bent down to kiss him.



TWO SISTERS.

Two sisters knocked at the door of a famous master of witchcraft. One was named Cheerfulness, the other Sorrowful.

When they were admitted before the master of witchcraft Sorrowful bent down her knees before him and said pleadingly: "Help us! Our parents are dead, our house is burned, we have nothing but the garments we wear. What shall we do?"

The master of witchcraft pointed into the blooming land and said: "A thousand roads are open for you; you will find treasures on every one if you will seek in earnest. Take this veil which will protect you in dangers, go out and try to find treasures, and in a year come back here. To her who has succeeded in finding the most valuable treasure I will bestow a crown and a kingdom."

So the sisters went out to strive for treasures. The oldest one walked as if she were bent under a burden too heavy to carry, and she was sighing and complaining all the time, but the younger one walked with a light step and seemed gay. The one noticed the thorns, the other the flowers which bordered the path.

But as they both proceeded, no one could detect any treasure.

"Which treasures, dost thou think, was the master thinking of?" asked Cheerfulness.

"Gold, without any gestion!"

"And how can we find it?"

"That is what I am thinking of all the time," said Sorrowful. "It is clear that we shall not find it without an effort on our part. We shall have to work for it!"

And when the sisters came to a large city, they settled down there and began to work.



Sorrowful considered her work a heavy burden ; Cheerfulness sang in doing it and seemed to enjoy it. And she gave the gold which she received for her work to her sister because she thought it was too much bother to keep it.

“But think of the treasure that thou, too, must bring back !” said Sorrowful.

There was a sunbeam gliding into the room ; Cheerfulness let it play on her head, and said : “That is gold, too ! I will gather sunbeams !”

“Thou art foolish !” said Sorrowful. “Thou thinkest of everything as a toy. If the master should not keep his word, I have my treasure safe, whereas thou canst do nothing with sunbeams !”

“O yes, I can ! I can please others with them. I can carry them in poor, dark rooms and make them light. Look thou for gold ; I shall look for sunbeams.”

Then the sisters parted, each one by herself pursuing her purpose. At the appointed day they met again before the gate of the master’s castle.

Sorrowful carried a long and heavy chain of gold ; Cheerfulness, a net of sunbeams.

“Poor sister !” said Cheerfulness kindly. “How pale thou dost look, and how heavy this chain must be ; shall I not help thee to carry it ?”

“I could not trust my treasure to thee !” said Sorrowful ; “to thee who in this long time has not accomplished anything better than to weave a net of sunbeams.”

When they both stood again before the master of witchcraft, the difference between them was more striking than a year before. Sorrowful looked pale with worry, the lines of her face were sharpened, her eyes red from sitting working, or perhaps from tears. While Cheerfulness, on the other hand,

had blooming cheeks and bright eyes, and her child-like face was full of charm and life.

"You have chosen your fate now yourselves," said the master. "To thee, Cheerfulness, is due the crown. I will form it for thee with these sunbeams. There is none more beautiful that I could give thee. Wherever thou goest, one will love thee, and thou wilt find a kingdom in the hearts of those to whom thou bringest joy. But thou, Sorrowful, carry on thy heavy chain of gold."

When he had thus spoken, the sisters found themselves again on the path from whence they had started a year before.

"Here our ways part forever!" said Sorrowful. "I knew that he would not keep his word."

"But he kept it," said Cheerfulness, all radiant in her crown of sunbeams.

Then Sorrowful slowly turned from her and started out into the dark, gloomy night, while Cheerfulness walked toward the rising sun, which threw a soft radiance over her form.

FAKÓ.



It was but a horse, called Fakó. It was small and of a rough and ugly appearance; besides, it was wild and untrained, and when brought to the market, no one would buy it, for the other horses had been in good care and looked handsome. But the young prince of the country happened to ride

across the market, he himself on the most beautiful horse



ever seen, and noticing Fakó, he said: "What a cute little horse! and wild, too! I should like to try and make it tame."

Fakó whinnied with joy, for of all the beautiful horses, he, the ugly, despised little Fakó, was bought for a high price by a prince.

He came now into good care, and the prince himself tried to tame him, and Fakó obeyed him in every respect. Being in such good hands Fakó soon proved quite a pretty horse. Quick as lightning, nimble as a cat, he was devoted to his master like a child, and soon became his favorite. The prince liked to make with him long strolls into the wild mountains, and in the deep silence and grand loneliness of nature he often spoke with Fakó, who seemed to understand him perfectly.

One day, when the prince, on such an excursion, was tired out from the rough path, he descended to take a rest in the shadow of a fir-tree, and tied Fakó not far from him where he would find a good pasture.

As soon as the prince stretched himself out on the soft moss, he fell fast asleep, and he had a lovely dream. A sweet girl approached him, took his hand and led him to a clear spring. Large and wonderful flowers were growing there and she picked one, filled it with water, and offered it to him to drink.

Never had the prince before met with a drink that had thus refreshed him, but when he would express his thanks to the lovely maiden, she had disappeared, and he awoke. There stood Fakó pasturing under the fir-tree; but the prince realized a burning thirst.

"Look for a spring, Fakó!" said the prince. Then Fakó preceded his master, until they came to a spring; but it was an ordinary spring. The water did not seem to refresh the prince, and in low spirits he returned to his castle.



The next day the prince again rode to the spot where he had the pleasant dream; but trying to sleep, he found himself so restless that he gave it up and approached Fakó.

"My dear little Fakó," said he, "thou must help me, or I shall die from longing. Dost thou not know a spring, where wonderful flowers bend over the clear water, and where a lovely maiden is the guardian? Come and show me the way thither."

Then Fakó walked again before his master and they came into a dark and narrow ravine between the rocks; a wild water was rushing through it, and there seemed no end to it. Sometimes Fakó stopped and looked back, if his master could follow him.

At last they reached a dark cave from which the dashing water came.

Here Fakó stopped and pawed at the rock. When he did so for the third time, the beautiful maiden, whom the prince had seen in his dream, appeared, took his hand and led him into the cave beside the roaring water. It was a long and dark walk, but the prince held the soft, warm hand of his companion and felt happy.

In the distance a gleam of light was seen which proved to be the end of the cave; the water became more quiet, the darkness changed into a dreamy twilight, and at last they reached the end of the cave and stepped out into the warm sunshine.

There was the silent water, deep and clear as the prince had seen it in his dream, and there grew the large and wonderful flowers, and his sweet companion picked a brilliant one, filled it with water and smilingly offered it to the prince. And a calm and happiness filled his soul, as he had never realized before. But when he returned to his companion, she had disappeared, and he suddenly found himself again before the



entrance of the dark cave where Fakó stood waiting for him. In a dream he returned to his magnificent castle.


Winter came, and the prince tried in vain to find the place once more that would lead him to the wonderful spring. Fakó, too, seemed to have lost the right track, and many and many a time they started for the snowy mountains and came home without having succeeded in finding the entrance to the cave. The poor prince became ill from longing and grieving, and one morning Fakó heard the grooms in the stable say: "There is no hope of recovery for the prince; the doctor says he will die."

Then Fakó, learning this, in despair broke out of the stable and ran away as fast as he could.

The prince, who was just going to die, heard the clatter of the hoofs and asked if it was Fakó. It was the first word that the prince had spoken for a long time. The doctor looked out of the window and said: "Yes, it is Fakó."

"Help me to live then a short time if you can," said the prince, and finally leaned back in the cushions. But Fakó, as fast as he could, took his way to the snowy mountains.

The anxiety for his master's welfare sharpened his instinct and let him find the right way to the cave. He again knocked at the entrance, ah, long in vain! At last the lovely guard of the spring appeared, and seeing Fakó all alone, trembling and looking at her with pleading eyes, she at once understood the message and flung herself on his back, and Fakó made haste to return to the castle. Meanwhile the prince had fought against the shadows of death. It seemed to become darker and darker around him, and he closed his eyes. But suddenly a ray of light seemed to dissolve the darkness, and opening his eyes he beheld the image of his dreams and love bending over him to kiss him.



And in that moment the shadows of death were all destroyed by the glorious light of life and love, but, anxious still, he asked : "Thou wilt stay with me now?"

"Yes, I will stay with thee," said the beautiful maiden.

And she became his queen, and made him much happier still than he had ever dreamed.

And Fakó? What became of him?

Ah! he had to pay that ride with his life. It had been too much for such a little horse. When he was led into the stable, he broke down, and his master could do nothing more for him, but erect a monument tombstone, whereupon was carved in golden letters :

"THE FAITHFUL FAKÓ."

"LONG AGO."

That was a queer fellow. His name was "Long Ago." He was dressed in a stiff, old fashioned garment, his walk was slow, his back bent under the load of years. How old might he be? The wrinkles of his face were telling a thousand interesting stories, there was something of sadness and happiness at once in his smile, and his eyes seemed to shine with eternal youth.

"Long Ago,"—not youth calls him her friend; she laughs at him and mocks him, because he does not adapt himself to the times; youth does not understand him; yet for her will come the time when he will be her friend.

Then he will say : "Do you not think of it, how you once mocked me?"

He is the best friend and consoler for all who are alone and forsaken, the queer fellow "Long Ago." But not only



for those—no, for all who look back on the road which was spread with flowers at the beginning, and ended in thorns.

He took me once along on his walk. It was just Christmas. The boys on the street threw snowballs at him and called him names. But he did not care; he was used to that. "Life will punish them so hard for every insolence, for every injustice which they do to others," said he. "Also, I shall sometime make up my account with them, but not take notice of such trifles."

I stopped before a high, dark house. Only some of the windows in the first floor were lighted, and the half-opened curtains allowed a glimpse into the room.

"It looks pleasant in there," I said.

"Let us go in," said "Long Ago."

The handsome room was pleasant, warm, and filled with the odor of the Christmas-tree and the burning candles. The children who played under the tree, paid no attention to our entrance, neither did the young couple who was sitting and talking in a cosy corner. But the old ones, who were sitting there in the big and comfortable chairs—what a hearty welcome they gave to "Long Ago"! They shook hands with him and placed him between them, and there was no end of talking. They seemed to become young again, speaking about times that were long gone by. The young couple drew near and listened, and the children carried their toys to the old people, and sat down on the floor in front of them, and looked with large and wondering eyes at the strange visitor. And then the old couple ordered some champagne, because only this, they said, was good enough with which to drink the health of so good a friend.

"Now it is time to go," said "Long Ago," and we continued our walk in the snow-covered streets. But we did not



go far ; it was right in the business part of the city where we entered a gloomy building. One of the offices which occupied the floor, was open still. Here we entered. Bent over the writing desk sat a man in middle age, who seemed to be very busy. He only looked up hastily at our entrance, and then wrote on again.

"Good evening," said "Long Ago." His voice seemed to have great power, for the busy man laid down his pen suddenly, rose and greeted us.

"You have scarcely time for your old friends," said "Long Ago." "It is quite a little while since we have met."

"Yes, I am kept so very busy," said, nervously, the other. "One cannot trust all things to others, and my business grows stronger than I."

"But to-night is Christmas."

The other one laughed. "For me there is no Christmas any more !"

"Once it was not so !" said "Long Ago." "Do you still think of that Christmas tree that you helped trim in the professor's house ? Do you think of the professor's daughter ?"

"Yes. Have you any news of her ? But come, sit down near the fire ; it is somewhat chilly here." And he poked the fire and drew up chairs in front of the grate.

"But I will not interrupt you in your work."

"Oh, there is time for that ! One so seldom sees a good old friend ; sometimes I feel myself like a ciphering book. What were we talking about ?—Oh, yes, of the professor's daughter. Yes, that was a splendid Christmas eve ! And how sweet she looked with the white rose in her hair."

"You loved her very dearly," said "Long Ago," slowly. "It was hard for you to give her to your best friend ; and he deceived you."



"He is dead ; I do not accuse him."

"And you love her still."

"No, no ! I have grown old and cold. I cannot love any more ; I love only myself."

"You think so ?" said smiling "Long Ago." "I am going to see her now ; will you go with me?"

"I am kept almost too busy to go ; but yet, I have not been there for a long while, and I would rather go with you than alone."

And so we went silently and thoughtfully along the streets, until a wide yard opened its gates, where the bright star-night, with all its charms, was glittering on the untouched snow.

There was a handsome residence under the dark fir trees, and somewhat hesitatingly the two were approaching the entrance. "Wait here for me. I have to be alone with these two," said "Long Ago" to me.

And I was walking up and down the alley which led to the house. The branches of the dark linden trees were covered with ice, and sparkled in the moonshine. It was bitter cold, and I felt suddenly, as if I had dreamt, as if the little professor's daughter was connected very closely with my own life, and as if I had walked under these lindens when they were in bloom.

Closer I wrapped myself in my furs, cast another glance at the house under the fir tees, and went shivering home.

JUST A MATCH.

Yes, it was but a match. Not a safety match which only catches fire at its own box, lest they should burn on the wrong occasion, but a real parlor match, ready to burn whenever someone should happen to strike it. But this seemed rather doubtful for the match I speak of, because it lived in a house where



matches were rare, and so it was put in the parlor on a corner of the mantelpiece to be used only in a very critical case. There were costly and beautiful things in the house, the rooms were filled with bric-a-brac, even the luxury of fresh cut flowers was kept up all winter long, but matches were rare. The gas and lamps were lighted with a piece of paper ignited at the grate fire, and if there just happened to be callers in the hours of twilight, there was always much ado about matches. No one had seen any, no one could find any, and the caller, if it happened to be a gentleman, generously offered one of his own, if he was lucky to have one. So the parlor match in the corner of the mantelpiece thought himself very precious and enjoyed thoroughly his life. And it was very pleasant indeed to live in such beautiful surroundings, to meet with people who were always well dressed and always amiable, and to look at snow and frost through a lace curtain from the corner of a fireplace; to listen to a sonata of Beethoven, or a song of Brahms, and to the chat of the amiable people.

It was very pleasant indeed, as long as it was new, but when the match had stayed in that corner for a long while, it did not view the life in a parlor any more so enthusiastically.

The songs and the pieces were always the same; so were the topics of the conversation.

The match began to think about its destination, and was afraid that it would never reach it. For the destination of a match is to burn; it is the prime of its life, and vanishing in the glory of a flame, it is something grand and wonderful even in a match.

There was a young gentleman calling every Sunday at the house, a faithful admirer of the handsome daughter. This young man was very timid, and his love, which he dared not explain, made him more so. His behavior, therefore, was so



awkward and queer, that the match delighted in making fun of him, and sometimes just trembled with the desire to give him something of the fire and smartness of a match. It was in the twilight hour of a Sunday afternoon, when the faithful caller was sitting again before the grate with the object of his adoration. The lady of the house, who was sitting in a big arm chair near the window, and who had done her best in keeping up the conversation, could not help but fall asleep for awhile, as it was the time of her afternoon nap. The young girl did not know what to say any more, either, and feeling the dark, glowing eyes of her admirer resting on her face, she rose and said with a timid voice: "I think I ought to light the gas."

"Never mind the gas," said the young gentleman. "I have to tell you something which I never dared tell you in the gas-light. But there is something in the fire of a grate, something like poetry—something, I do not know what, but anyway it gives me courage to ask you something. I know that I am very awkward and timid; just tell me, please, do you think I **would** be a very bad match?"

Then a sleepy voice arose out of the big arm chair near the window.

"A match? There is one right in the corner of the mantelpiece, Lucy. You will have no trouble to find it."

And an angry little hand stretched out for the precious parlor match, struck it and lighted the gas. But she did not cast the match away after that; she kept it in her soft, white hand, watching how it was burning down in all its glory.

Was she thinking what a pity it was to burn the precious match for this occasion? or was she thinking about the other match proposed by her timid friend?

CINCINNATI, 1894.

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